

March 25, 2004

## **Public Notice for 401 Water Quality Certification**

### **Eureka Sand and Gravel In-Stream Gravel Bar Skimming at Singley Gravel Bar, Lower Eel River**

#### **Humboldt County**

On February 23, 2003, the Regional Water Board received an application from Mr. Paul Kraus of Eureka Sand and Gravel requesting a Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects) for gravel extraction from the Singley Gravel Bar. The Singley Gravel Bar is located on the lower Eel River near Fernbridge, Humboldt County. The proposed gravel extraction activities will cause disturbances to the Eel River in the Ferndale Hydrologic Subarea No. 111.11.

Eureka Ready Mix is proposing to mine up to 160,000 cubic yards per year of gravel from the Singley Gravel Bar below the Fernbridge crossing over the Eel River. The Singley Gravel Bar extends approximately one mile downstream from the Fernbridge crossing and the width varies between 1400 and 2400 feet. The total project area encompasses approximately 230 acres of gravel bar and river channel; however, only a portion of the gravel bar will typically be mined for gravel each year. The authorized volume of aggregate may not be extracted each year depending a variety of considerations including annual cross-section surveys, gravel recruitment rates, environmental restrictions, permitting requirements, market demand, and operational considerations.

The last time gravel extraction occurred on the Singley Gravel Bar site was in 1995. Gravel extraction at the site has primarily been from two main excavation areas, one area along the north bank and one along the south bank of the current low-flow channel. The area along the south bank is accessible using existing roads and does not require a river crossing. An existing haul road provides access to the north bank gravel bar; however, a bridge crossing may be required over a narrow secondary channel along the north side of the low-flow channel. Based on recent site visits and review of 2003 aerial photos, a bridge crossing is currently not needed to access the gravel bar.

Annual gravel extraction activities are proposed to begin in the summer of 2004 following the breeding season of the Western snowy plover (late July) and extend through November 1. In addition to the conditions set forth by the Regional Water Board, additional regulatory review and approval of the project is conducted by the California Department of Fish and Game, Army Corps of Engineers, and NOAA Fisheries. These agencies and the County of Humboldt Extraction Review Team require extensive monitoring, data gathering and reporting, including site inspections, channel cross sections, and aerial photograph review.

A supplemental Environmental Impact Report (EIR, State Clearinghouse #19633N15) for the proposed gravel mining operations was certified by the County of Humboldt on September 10, 1992. The supplemental EIR is based on certification of a Final Program EIR by Humboldt

County in 1992. The County of Humboldt has also approved a Conditional Use Permit (CUP-38-912) and Reclamation Plan (SMR-06-912) for this project.

Staff is proposing to regulate this project pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1341) and/or Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act Authority. In addition, staff will consider all comments received during a 21-day comment period that begins on the first date of issuance of this letter. If you have any questions or comments, please contact staff member Dean Prat at (707) 576-2801, or at [pratd@rbl.swrcb.ca.gov](mailto:pratd@rbl.swrcb.ca.gov) within 21 days of the posting of this notice.

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